the Apex Court. Consequently, further action for recovery practically gets stayed till the disposal of appeals/writs filed.

Withdrawal by OCC from Public Account

618. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been requested to allow OCC to withdraw Rs. 4429/- crore, which is lying with the Public account of India from 1st April, 1993;

(b) whether the amount is still receivable and forms part of other liabilities of Government;

(c) if so, whether the same is being allowed to be withdrawn by OCC to give some relief to the consumers;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Government has reduced customs and excise duties during the current year on petroleum products, thereby transferring benefit to the Oil Pool Account, which is offset by the outstanding balance of Rs. 4429 crores. Thus, the account stands squared up.

Measures to boost Farm Sector

619. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether farm sector called on the Finance Minister in January, 2001;

(b) if so, the details of their suggestions; and

(c) the action taken on Stable Policy for Agro-export and exemption from export cess to boost rural economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes Sir.

Farm sector representatives were invited by the Finance Minister as part of the prc-budget discussions.

(b) A number of suggestions were made particularly in the area of improving rural infrastructure, post-harvest technology, removing restrictions of movement of agricultural commodities etc., which has received careful attention of the Government.

(c) Policy of exports of agricultural products forms an integral part of the Export Import Policy of the country. The policy regarding exports of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising farm incomes of earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an on-going process, and accordingly, policy interventions arc made as and when considered necessary, with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable.

The exports of APEDA scheduled products made by EOUs/EPZs/ SEZs have been exempted from payment of cess of 0.5% that would be applicable under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Cess Act, 1985, with effect from 17.1.2001.

Cess on export of spices has also since been rationalised and now is levied @ 0.5% on all items of spices.

Frauds in exports to Russia

620. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the recent raids conducted by the Enforcement Directorate in Mumbai, a multi crore fraud of Indian exporters to Russia came to light;

(b) if so, what arc the details thereof stating the amount involved and the modus operandi of the exporters involved in the fraud; and

(c) what action has been taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) On the basis of documents recovered by the Enforcement Directorate and subsequent interrogation of persons involved, it is